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The Foodie SECTION



INVITE THE FOODIES:

The Foodie crew is out and about town-wide. Restaurant owners, chefs and food fans are invited to submit news and notices to The Foodies, c/o Long Islander newspapers, 149 Main Street, Huntington NY 11743, or e-mail foodie@longislandernews.com.

To suggest reviews, e-mail or call Peter Sloggatt at 631-427-7000.

Pastrami N Friends A Great Combo

By **Alessandra, Luann and Alex**
foodie@longislandernews.com

Walking into the door of Pastrami N Friends in Commack was like any other deli, from the outside. But as soon as you enter, you're thrown into a whole other time, resembling decades before the new millennium in a quaint restaurant that makes you feel you're at home.

Time traveling never seemed so easy.

With the friendly faces behind the deli counter, the waiters coming over to the table to see how everything is, being able to shred the thin slices of tender meats without a knife and sitting back in your chair to take in the walls adorned with art, it certainly is unlike any other deli. What makes it even more unique is its 100-percent Kosher meals, which are under rabbinical supervision, and its 100-percent Italian owner, Ernie.

Don't let the fact that he is Italian fool you. Ernie grew up working in Kosher delis and knows where to get top-quality eats for his store.

We started off with a Matzo Ball Chicken Rice soup (\$5.29 for a bowl) and a fried knish (\$3.29). The soup was delicious, and the matzo ball completely absorbed the broth, making it a light but perfect start. The knish was wonderfully fried, stuffed heartily with soft but firm potato.

Then we went for the real meat of the menu, literally - the famous pastrami hot sandwich (\$9.79), which was rated the No.



The homemade rugelach is worth saving room for.

1 pastrami in Long Island. The pastrami was incredible, tender, with a tasty spice, and piled high - certainly understandable why it was voted first-place.

And what's pastrami without its friends? We went for the corned beef hot sandwich (\$9.79) and the Brisket Special (\$15.99), which comes with gravy, potato pancake, apple sauce and vegetables. The corned beef was tender and fell apart in our mouths - way too good not to try. The brisket, also tender, was moist and tummy warming, in a thin gravy that was rich without being thick. The accompanying potato pancake was crispy and crunchy, a wonderful side to the entrée.

While we were completely satisfied with what we had, there were other options on the menu we wouldn't mind trying next time, such as the Sesame Chicken in a Basket (\$14.99) with a choice of potato or cole slaw, and the Hungarian Goulash (\$16.49), which is lean, tender beef over noodles with vegetables. Under the "Noshes" part of the menu were Hush Puppies (\$5.59) and Stuffed Derma (\$7.99). The



The king of the kosher meats: pastrami!

menu features hot and cold sandwiches, deli platters, over-stuffed combination sandwiches, wraps and burgers too.

To finish off a great meal, we tried rugelach (\$4.99), pastries layered with fruit or chocolate and rolled. We couldn't keep our forks off the chocolate, and the warm raspberry one made our mouths water.

Once we heard Ernie's story we were not surprised by how much we enjoyed our meal. The owner grew up in Brooklyn and stays true to his family traditions. With recipes that were added to but not changed completely, he was able to construct a menu with home values that satisfies stomachs. The knishes come from Brooklyn, and the cole slaw, which is served at the beginning of every meal with a bucket of pickles, and the cookies are homemade.

Ernie bought the restaurant in 1975 in Commack, encouraged by the presence of local synagogues in the area. After working in a Kosher deli near his hometown



The beef brisket is one of our favorites at Pastrami 'N' Friends.

of Flatbush, the owner came here and has stayed ever since, wanting to make Pastrami N Friends a family store.

Just like the sign in the restaurant says - "Good food, good times, good friends."

Pastrami N Friends

110A Commack Rd
Commack
631-499-9537
pastraminfriends.com

Atmosphere: Casual, family friendly
Cuisine: Kosher deli
Price range: Inexpensive-mod-erate